

## **From 3 blocks to 5 miles in less than a year.....**

In December 2006, I found myself having trouble walking three blocks to catch the bus after work. I wasn't happy with the way I felt or with the way I looked. I had been heavy most of my life, but felt then that I was completely out of control. I had considered surgery to lose the weight, but my doctor didn't think that was a good idea. She recommended a program called "New Direction". It is a very low calorie diet that is medically monitored. The program offers three shakes and one breakfast bar each day. I was on the shakes for seven months and continued losing weight after going back to regular food. Along with the diet, there was a nutritionist, an exercise physiologist, and a psychologist alternating at weekly meetings.

At the start, I was told to start walking 15 minutes each day. I looked at the skinny exercise expert and thought – like that is going to happen, "I can't walk three blocks." I did try and since I was losing weight quickly it became easier. **By early spring I was able to walk a mile and by the fall of 2007 I could walk five miles. Walking became fun!!**

**I lost 100 pounds and cannot explain how good it feels.** If I could give someone just one day with the way I feel, it would inspire them to lose the weight. I feel the best I have during my entire adult life. I find it so much easier to live. Doing simple things like looking under my desk or bending over to pick something up is so much easier. I don't mind house-cleaning or carrying groceries in. To this day, I am still finding things I can do easier with the weight off. I like the way I look. **I am off blood pressure medication. I was two points from diabetes, but now my blood sugar is perfect. My self esteem has improved. I could go on and on.**

**I eat entirely different.** No chips, crackers, cake, pie, etc. Lots of salads, vegetables, fruit, sugar-free jello and whole grain breads. I eat one fish meal each week and lean meat or chicken the other days. Some days are meatless. I am very conscious of what I am eating. I keep a food diary each day. This helps me stay on track!

I've had the weight off one year and was able to keep it off this summer after a bout with bursitis and then foot surgery that kept me from walking. I learned I am able to adjust what I eat and even without the walking over the summer, I've maintained the weight. I was worried I would get out of the habit of walking, but now that I can again, it feels great. Never thought I'd say that! Besides walking, I also do strength training with bands and stretching five times a week.

My co-workers supported my weight loss effort along the way and still help me stay focused. They were a very big part of my successful mission, and I appreciate all the help they gave me.

**And for those of you who think you are too old to get fit and healthy, this is one 61 year-old who knows it can be done no matter what your age! Find a way that works for you and lose the weight. Become physically active! You'll feel great! I absolutely guarantee it. You won't believe how great you feel! Honest!**

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